

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 030821Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3711

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 7201

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, PFOR, CSCE, GE, US

SUBJECT: US-GDR CULTURAL RELATIONS

REF: BERLIN 7146

1. USIA DEPUTY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ARNOLD AND EMBASSY PAO CALLED ON DR. WERNER BETTIN OF MFA CULTURAL SECTION NOVEMBER 30 TO REVIEW CURRENT STATE PRESS AND CULTURAL RELATIONS. DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND CULTURAL PLAN, PROPOSED BY PAO AND CHARGE ON OCTOBER 12, WITH REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION GDR POSITION. BETTIN RESPONDED WITH LENGTHLY STATEMENT ABOUT NEED FOR US/GDR RELATIONSHIP CORRESPONDING TO THOSE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, NAMELY A CULTURAL AGREEMENT, WITHOUT WHICH MOST ACTIVITIES NOT POSSIBLE.

2. WHEN REMINDED THAT CULTURAL PLAN HAD BEEN PROPOSED AS ALTERNATIVE TO CULTURAL AGREEMENT IN HOPE REACHING WORKING ARRANGEMENT, BETTIN REPLIED THAT GDR HAD NO PRECEDENT FOR CULTURAL PLAN AND THEREFORE COULD NOT ACCEPT IT. WHEN ASKED IF THIS REPRESENTED FINAL AND
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DEFINITIVE ANSWER TO EMBASSY PROPOSAL, BETTIN REPLIED

AFFIRMATIVELY. ASKED IF HE WAS AWARE OF DR. GEYER'S SUGGESTION TO CHARGE (REFTEL) THAT TWO SIDES EXCHANGE SCHEDULES FOR CULTURAL EVENTS IN 1977, BETTIN SAID HE DID AND WAS REPAED TO ENGAGE IN " EXCAHNGE OF DIEAS ON CULTURAL EVENTS", WHICH HE STRESSED WAS HIS UNDER- STANDING OF GEYER PROPOSAL.

3. QUESTIONED BY ARNOLD ON EXTENT GDR PREPARED RESPOND US SUGGESTIONS, BETTIN NOTED ACQUIESCENCE TO WEEK OF AMERICAN FILMS NEXT SPRING AND PAUL STRAND EXHIBIT NEXTWINTER AS EXAMPLES GDR'S POSITIVE APPROACH CULTURAL RELATIONS, AND AS POSSIBLE PRELUDE US CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE FRAMEWORK CULTURAL AGREEMENT. BETTIN CITED IREX AND DRESDEN ART TREASURES AS EXAMPLES GDR FLEXIBILITY IN PROMOTING CULTURAL RELATIONS WITHOUT OFFICIAL AGREEMENT.

4. TURNING TO QUESTION OF CIRCULATION OF CULTURAL MATERIALS, ARNOLD RAISED MATTER OF MAILINGS DIRECTLY BY CHIEF OF MISSION OR PAO TO AN ACQUAINTANCE WHO HAPPENED TO BE CULTURAL PERSONALITY. BETTIN REPLIED IN NEGATIVE, POINTING OUT THAT IN ABSENCE OF CULTURAL AGREEMENT BUT UNDER PRESENT GDR PRESS LAW, EVEN SUCH MAIL CONTACT IS PROHIBITED. ARNOLD POINTED TO COMPLETE FREEDOM AND OPEN ACCESS ENJOYED BY GDR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, BUT BETTIN REITERATED HIS STAND.

5. DISCUSSION ENSUED ABOUT NEW CHANCERY AND PLANS FOR LIBRARY AND AUDITORIUM AS FORUM FOR CULTURAL PROGRAMS, IN COURSE OF WHICH, IN OFFHAND MANNER, BETTIN COMMENTED THAT " OF COURSE, NO VISITORS ARE ALLOWED TO ENTER FOREIGN EMBASSIES," GOING ON TO SAY ALSO THAT NO OTHER EMBASSY IN EAST BERLIN HOUSED A LIBRARY FOR THE PUBLIC.

6. PAO EXPRESSED REGRET THAT BETTIN COULD NOT RECEIVE SALZBURG SEMINAR ACADEMIC DIRECTOR BOTKIN ON NOVEMBER QQ DURING HIS BRIEF VISIT, AND POINTED OUT SEMINAR WAS NOT EXCHANGE PROGRAM BUT ONLY FOR FOREIGN CANDIDATES OF WHICH EAST EUROEPANS, ESPECIALLY POLES, COMPRISED THE LARGEST SEGMENT. BETTIN AGREED TO EXAMINEMATERIALS FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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SEMINAR MADE AVAILABLE TO HIM, AND ASKED HIS NOTETAKER TO BE CERTAIN TO RECORD THECOMMENT.

7. COMMENT: WE SEE LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR CULTURAL PLAN AND WHAT GEYER AND BETTIN HAVE PROPOSED, EXCEPT FOR THE TACTIC OF MAKING IT APPEAR AS A GDR INITIATIVE

.
WE CAN LIVE WITH THAT INASMUCH AS THE PROPOSAL DOES

REPRESENT FORWARD MOVEMENT ON THE CULTURAL SIDE. WE
ARE PREPARED TO PROCEED IWHT PLANS FOR 1977 AND AWAIT
SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FROM FROM THE DEPARTMENT AND AGENCY. WHILE
NO ONE EXPECTS ANYTHING BUT A SLOW AND LABORIOUS
PROCESS, WE SHOULD LOSE NO TIME IN TESTING THE
SINCERITY OF THE GDR'S MOTIVES.
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